

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 08700 291837Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 /051 W
-----291842Z 023517 /44

O 291500Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4251
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, IS, EG
SUBJECT: MAYOR SHAWWA REQUESTS GAZA CITY ELECTIONS

1. IN A DECEMBER 28 MEETING WITH MILITARY GOVERNOR ORLY,
GAZA STRIP MAYOR RASHED SHAWWA REQUESTED THAT ELECTIONS
BE HELD FOR GAZA CITY PRIOR TO THE END OF MARCH 1977. A
MILITARY GOVERNMENT SOURCE IN GAZA TOLD US THAT SHAWWA'S
REQUEST CAME AS "A COMPLETE SURPRISE" AND WAS BEING CON-
SIDERED BY THE AUTHORITIES. HE ADDED THAT AS YET THERE
HAD BEEN NO REACTION FROM OTHER POLITICAL FIGURES IN THE
GAZA STRIP, BUT THE ISRAELIS DEFINITELY SEE THE NEW MOVE
AS A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT. THE ELECTIONS, IF HELD, WOULD
BE THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY IN THIRTY YEARS FOR GAZANS TO
CHOOSE DEMOCRATICALLY THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT.

2. GAZA CITY MANAGER ISAM SHAWWA TOLD US DECEMBER
29 THAT THE MAYOR HAD ASSURED ORLY THAT HE AND THE
PRESENT GAZA COUNCIL WOULD SERVE IN A CARETAKER
CAPACITY UNTIL MARCH 31, 1977. THEY WOULD ALSO
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PRESENT THEMSELVES AS CANDIDATES IN THE ELECTIONS.
ISAM SHAWWA SUCCINCTLY EXPLAINED THE REASON FOR THE
MAYOR'S REQUEST: "WITH RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AREA,
THE MAYOR FEELS THAT HE WOULD BE IN A MUCH STRONGER
POSITION AFTER DIRECT ELECTIONS."

3. COMMENT: GIVEN THE SOURCE'S OPTIMISTIC TONE, IT
APPEARS THAT THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT MAY SOON ANNOUNCE
APPROVAL FOR ELECTIONS, NOT ONLY IN GAZA CITY, BUT IN
THE OTHER LOCALITIES OF THE STRIP AS WELL. THE ISRAELIS
AND THE SHAWWAS SHARE A COMMON INTEREST IN AN ALTERNATIVE
TO THE PLO, AND, AS ISAM SHAWWA IMPLIED, THE TIMING OF
ELECTIONS IS RELATED TO THE ARAB "PEACE OFFENSIVE."
DUNNIGAN

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Message Attributes

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